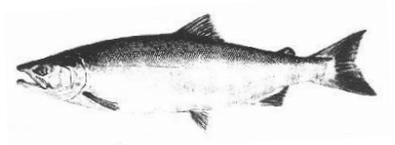


**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



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**2012 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 11
Summer Update # 2, Districts 1-6
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

2012 Chinook and Summer Chum Outlooks

The expected total Yukon River Chinook salmon run size is between 109,000 and 146,000 fish based on low productivity since 2007. Thus, the 2012 Yukon River Chinook salmon run size will likely be poor to below average, and conservation measures will be necessary to share the available harvest.

The 2012 summer chum salmon run size is anticipated to be 1.5-2 million fish. A run of this size should provide for escapement, a normal subsistence harvest, and a potential surplus of 500,000 - 1 million fish available for commercial harvest. Summer chum salmon runs have provided for a harvestable surplus in each of the last 9 years (2003–2011).

For detailed information on the 2012 Yukon Area Subsistence, Personal Use, and Commercial Salmon Fisheries Outlook and Management Strategies follow the link below.

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/FedAidpdfs/RIR.3A.2012.04.pdf>

Assessment Projects

Dall Point Test Fishery- 5.5-inch drift net project/YDFDA, ADF&G

Since its inception in 2009, the project scope and objectives have undergone multiple changes. For the 2012 season, the primary project objective is to determine the feasibility of indexing summer chum salmon abundance and run timing prior to migration into the Yukon River. For the 2012 season the test fishery will only be employing 5.5-inch mesh nets to target summer chum salmon. The Dall Point drift test fishery near Hooper Bay began fishing June 16. The cumulative summer chum salmon CPUE through June 18 is 203.88.

Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF)- 8.5-inch set net project/ADF&G, YDFDA

The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE through June 18 is 0.47, which is below the average of 8.81 for this date. It is also below the average of 3.48 for historical late years for this date.

Additionally, test fishing for Chinook salmon with 8.25-inch drift gillnet gear began June 3 at the Big Eddy. Drift CPUE data is corroborated with CPUE data from the Big Eddy set net location. The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE through June 18 is 104.72.

Summer Chum Drift Test Fishery- 5.5-inch drift net project/ADFG, YDFDA

The cumulative summer chum salmon CPUE through June 18 is 1,615.08 which is above the historical median of 738.16 for this date.

Mountain Village Chinook Drift Test Fishery- 7.5-inch mesh drift net project/ADFG, ATC, YDFDA

The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE through June 18 is 208.23 which is below the (2010-2011) average of 310.52.

Pilot Station sonar project/ADFG

Chinook salmon passage at Pilot Station sonar is estimated to be approximately 4,500 through June 18, which is below the average of 44,600 for this date. It is also below the average of 12,300 for historical late years for this date. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be approximately 104,000, which is below the median of 198,000 for this date.

Anvik River sonar project/ADFG

The Anvik River sonar project became operational on June 17. No summer chum salmon have been detected as of June 17.

NOTE: Other assessment projects will be added as they become operational.

Age Composition

The Chinook salmon age composition from the 8.5-inch LYTF set nets through June 16 (Big Eddy) and June 14 (Middle Mouth) was 31% age-5 and 69% age-6 fish. Females were 54%. The sample size was 13 fish.

The Chinook salmon age composition from the 8.25-inch Big Eddy drift test fishery was 30% age-5, 67% age-6, and 3% age 7 fish. Females were 66%. The sample size was 35 fish.

The chum salmon age composition from the 5.5-inch LYTF drift nets through June 17 (Big Eddy) and June 14 (Middle Mouth) was 47% age-4, 45% age-5, and 8% age-6 fish. The sample size was 152 fish. Age-4 fish were one and one-half times the average for this date and age-5 fish were two-thirds average. Females were 42%, 15 percentage points below average.

Assessment

Coastal ice is breaking up and waters immediately adjacent to the Yukon River mouths are mostly ice free. In the lower river, the water level continues to be high and the debris load is moderate. Subsistence effort in the lower river has increased during the last week. Subsistence fishermen have reported good catches of summer chum. In response to the late Chinook salmon run some fishermen have been targeting summer chum salmon while waiting for the Chinook salmon abundance to increase.

The Chinook salmon run timing is tracking considerably later than historical averages. Local reports and satellite imagery have indicated that considerable ice has been present off the coast which may still be inhibiting Chinook and summer chum salmon entry into the river. The historical average first quartile of the run at the Lower Yukon Test Fishery is June 15 while test fishery data is indicating that just now the run is beginning to build. The historical average first quartile for other similar late run years is June 20 and inseason projection estimates suggest the first quartile may even be later than the average for late years. The Pilot Station sonar cumulative passage estimate of approximately 4,500 Chinook salmon through June 18 is well below the historical average of 45,000 for this date and approximately a third of the average passage estimates at this point for late run years.

The summer chum salmon run is also just starting to build as indicated by subsistence harvest reports, test fishery indices, and Pilot Station sonar passage estimates. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be approximately 104,000, which is below the median of 198,000 for this date.

Current Management

The current subsistence fishing schedules are as follows:

Coastal District: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Based on the poor preseason outlook and the low abundance of Chinook salmon observed to date, subsistence salmon fishing gear is being restricted to a maximum of 6-inch mesh size in Districts 1 and 2 in an effort to conserve Chinook salmon and allow subsistence fishermen the opportunity to target summer chum salmon.

District 1: Effective 8:00 p.m. Monday, June 18, subsistence salmon fishing periods in District 1 will be restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size to conserve Chinook salmon. Subsistence salmon fishing is open for two 36-hour periods per week from 8:00 p.m. Mondays until 8:00 a.m. Wednesdays and from 8:00 p.m. Thursdays until 8:00 a.m. Saturdays.

District 2: Effective 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 20, subsistence salmon fishing periods in District 2 will be restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size to conserve Chinook salmon. Subsistence salmon fishing is open for two 36-hour periods per week from 8:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 8:00 a.m. Fridays and from 8:00 p.m. Sundays until 8:00 a.m. Tuesdays.

In Districts 3-6 including the Koyukuk and Innoko Rivers, fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

District 3: Subsistence salmon fishing in District 3 is open for two 36-hour periods per week from 8:00 p.m. Sundays until 8:00 a.m. Tuesdays and from 8:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 8:00 a.m. Fridays.

Subdistrict Y-4A: Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistrict Y-4A consists of two 48-hour fishing periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Sundays until 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 6:00 p.m. Fridays.

Subdistricts Y-4B&C: Subsistence salmon fishing will close in Subdistricts Y-4B&C at 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 19 and then reopen 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 20. Subdistricts Y-4B&C regulatory subsistence salmon fishing schedule consists of two 48-hour fishing periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Sundays until 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 6:00 p.m. Fridays.

Subdistricts Y-5A,B&C: Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistricts Y-5A,B&C is currently open seven days per week, 24 hours a day until the regulatory fishing schedule is implemented. Subdistricts Y-5A,B&C will close at 6:00 p.m. Sunday, June 24 and then reopen 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 26. Subdistricts Y-5A,B&C regulatory subsistence salmon fishing schedule consists of two 48-hour fishing periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays until 6:00 p.m. Thursdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Sundays.

Subdistrict 5D: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day.

District 6: The subsistence salmon fishing schedule consists of two 42-hour fishing periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays.

The Old Minto Area: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays.

The Innoko River: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day.

The Koyukuk River: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

Recorded fishery announcements and updates will be available 24 hours a day at 949-1731 or 1-866-479-7387. If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the Emmonak ADF&G office at 949-1320. The Emmonak ADF&G office will stand by on VHF channel 7A.